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INT 857/1

PA

I suggest
we keep a copy
of Kinn's letter
and Seig's reply
for reference in
the oral briefing
of the Seig on
the Dulles report
b) you send back
the file with the
note I have
drafted.

JF.

INR 58D776 National Intelligence General

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Nat'l Intell - Gen'l

INT 857/2

March 10, 1949

S/S - Mr. Humelsine

Carl:

Bob Barnes kindly told Fisher about this letter and sent it up to him.

Although I am in complete agreement with Kim Roosevelt and with the Secretary's reply, I think it a travesty that it was never sent to R in the course of its peregrinations, let alone at the outset.

W. Park Armstrong, Jr.

Attachment

Letter of Feb. 1
from Kermit Roosevelt
to Mr. Acheson, with
Mr. Acheson's reply.

INR: 580776 National Intelligence Council

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#612
INT 857/3

February 16, 1949

Dear Kim:

I have your letter of February 1, by which you sent me a memorandum containing your ideas on our present intelligence set-up and suggesting certain improvements. I have read your memorandum with interest and am only too glad to assure you that the ideas you express parallel very closely the thinking of those persons in the Department who are giving their serious attention to the problem of improving the Government's intelligence organizations. Your remarks about continuity of direction and civilian control strike a responsive chord.

Your understanding that Frank Wisner is to be shifted from his present important duties is not correct. We plan to continue Wisner in his present assignment. We feel he is a fine person for the job.

I appreciate your bringing the name of George Levison to my attention. We will be in a better position to ascertain our personnel requirements in connection with Point 4 of the President's inaugural address when the scope of that program becomes more thoroughly defined. I shall certainly keep George in mind. At the moment we have been forced to move ahead very rapidly on the overall planning and interdepartmental coordination, and I have asked Assistant Secretary Willard Thorpe to undertake this task.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Kermit Roosevelt,
2920 Forty-Fourth Place N.W.
Washington 16, D. C.

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P
Y

KERMIT ROOSEVELT
2920 Forty-Fourth Place N. W.
Washington 16, D. C.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

February 1, 1949

Dear Dean,

The attached is self-explanatory. I think anything you could do to improve the situation would be a tremendous service. If you should want to speak with me further about this, I'm at hand. In any case, you need not fear that this missive is the first of a long series! I have no intention of bombarding you; you have worries enough as it is.

However, one more unsolicited suggestion: If you are looking for a good man to work, say, on Point Four in the Middle East, may I remind you of George Levison? I am sure that he would willingly leave his insurance business in San Francisco if he thought he could do a worthwhile job in the public service. He would be an excellent choice for a variety of assignments.

With every possible wish for success,

Yours as ever,
Kim

P.S. The reported plan

to shift Frank Wisner from his present post to work on North Atlantic Pact affairs is another example of lack of continuity in direction of important secret operations. Personally I think it important from every point of view that Frank should stay on his present assignment.
(memo attached)

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INT 157/5

C O P Y

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

This is a memorandum on the dangerous weakness in our present intelligence set-up.

I am addressing this note to you because of your work with the Hoover Commission, because as Secretary of State you are a member of the National Security Council, because from your wide experience you will recognize better than almost anyone else the importance of the matter, and because (I hope) you will not dismiss this as simply "more of Roosevelt's needling."

It is written on the basis of some first-hand war experience, but even more as a result of my work as Chief Historian of OSS. As you may remember, I spent a year in 1946-47 directing the preparation of the OSS War Record for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Since then I have served as a consultant on occasions for CIA, and have kept in touch, so far as security allows, with developments there. However, this is not in any sense an official memorandum. It does represent the feelings and fears of a number of men now in CIA, but must for obvious reasons be treated as a personal and confidential report.

I should also say that it is written in ignorance of any plans which may exist for the reorganization of CIA.

Now, with apologies for a windy introduction, to our muttons:

The importance of a secret intelligence organization to American security needs no stressing.

Two conditions necessary to the health of such an organization seem almost equally obvious, but cannot be, since they are presently lacking,

The first is continuity of direction (administration and control). The second is civilian direction, not in the sense of civilian representation upon a top committee, but in the sense that the responsible head of the organization should be a civilian.

Continuity is essential not only for the reasons that make it desirable in any government department but because intelligence and subversive activities are the most highly specialized undertakings, and because the merits or demerits of a particular proposed undertaking cannot be threshed out in public, or even in semi-public (as in other departmental circles or congressional committees in executive session.) The head man and his associates decide, and there can be no appeal. Therefore you simply cannot afford to be constantly educating a series of rapidly moving heads and their immediate staffs—particularly when many of them regard their CIA assignment simply as an unwelcome stop-gap to fill in between more desirable Army and Navy commands.

CIA has /

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CIA has had first an Admiral, then a General, then an Admiral, and so on apparently without end. The small number of qualified civilian personnel has been melting away in the heat of confusion and resentment which must result from such a situation.

That the head and most of the top officials should be civilians seems obvious from the nature of their jobs. (In detailed report, the necessity of close relations with the military should also be stressed, but these can be secured in other ways.) Direction of secret operations requires sympathetic evaluation of unorthodox ideas and tactics which long service in the regular armed forces seems rarely to provide.

In case of war, tremendous expansion of the present staff would be required; experience indicates that to have direction of such expansion under military control would be disastrous.

It would not be proper here to go into a discussion of the positive aspects of counter-espionage or deception programs, but it should be pointed out (as is confirmed by long British experience) that they demand:

Long-range, imaginative planning.

Concepts and techniques new to Americans—I mean that literally—which some Americans, almost all of them civilians, began to get towards the end of the way.

Security—not only in the technical intelligence sense, but also administrative and budgetary security.

A secret intelligence organization can be tremendously productive, or it can flop. Ours is not being tremendously productive. If war should come and find us with our present set-up, I, as historian of OSS, question whether we would not be worse off then than we were at the outbreak of the last war—for at least we started that off with a clean slate and no bad habits to overcome.

C O P Y

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